

STATUS OF THE CLAIMS SECTION:

Claim 1 (currently amended):        A method of producing sterilized packed pasta while preventing specks from appearing thereon, said method comprising the steps of:

      filling a container with pasta and water;

      boiling said pasta in said container inside a retort at  $F_0$  value of 0.1-1.5 while repeatedly increasing pressure inside said retort and releasing pressure inside said retort under conditions wherein said water is evaporated and a foamed portion of said water covers floating portion of said pasta; and

      thereafter sealing said container inside a clean booth;

      wherein said steps of increasing and releasing pressure inside said retort are repeated at a rate of 1-4 cycles per minute; and

      wherein said steps of increasing and releasing pressure inside said retort are carried out such that temperature inside said retort is  $105\pm 3^\circ\text{C}$  after said pressure is increased and  $102\pm 2^\circ\text{C}$  after said pressure is released and that temperatures in said retort after said pressure is repeatedly increased and released are different by  $2-8^\circ\text{C}$ .

Claim 2 (canceled).

Claim 3 (canceled).

Claim 4 (canceled).

Claim 5 (original):    The method of claim 1 wherein the pressure inside said retort is increased to a higher level of  $0.13\pm 0.02\text{MPa}$  and is released down to a lower level of  $0.11\pm 0.02\text{MPa}$ , and wherein said higher level and said lower level are different by 0.01-0.05MPa.

Claims 6-8 (canceled).

Claim 9 (original):    The method of claim 1 wherein the step of filling comprises the steps of preliminarily sterilizing surface of said pasta and filling said container with the

preliminarily sterilized pasta and water.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The method of claim 5 wherein the step of filling comprises the steps of preliminarily sterilizing surface of said pasta and filling said container with the preliminarily sterilized pasta and water.

Claim 11 (canceled).

Claim 12 (original): The method of claim 1 wherein the step of filling comprises the steps of placing said pasta inside said container, preliminarily sterilizing surface of said pasta and thereafter filling said container with water.

Claim 13 (previously presented): The method of claim 5 wherein the step of filling comprises the steps of placing said pasta inside said container, preliminarily sterilizing surface of said pasta and thereafter filling said container with water.

Claim 14 (canceled).

Claim 15 (original): The method of claim 1 wherein said water is adjusted to pH 2.5-4.2.

Claim 16 (previously presented): The method of claim 5 wherein said water is adjusted to pH 2.5-4.2.

Claim 17 (canceled).

Claim 18 (original): The method of claim 12 wherein the step of filling comprises the steps of preliminarily sterilizing surface of said pasta at  $F_0 = 0.1-6.0$  and using water adjusted to pH 2.5-4.2.

Claim 19 (original): The method of claim 13 wherein the step of filling comprises the steps of preliminarily sterilizing surface of said pasta at  $F_0 = 0.1-6.0$  and using water

adjusted to pH 2.5-4.2.

Claim 20 (canceled).

Claim 21 (original): The method of claim 1 wherein said pasta is dry pasta and said container is filled with said dry pasta and said water at weight ratio of 1/0.9 - 1/1.5.

Claim 22 (previously presented): The method of claim 5 wherein said pasta is dry pasta and said container is filled with said dry pasta and said water at weight ratio of 1/0.9 - 1/1.5.

Claim 23 (canceled).

Claim 24 (original): The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of steaming said container after said container is sealed.

Claim 25 (previously presented): The method of claim 5 further comprising the step of steaming said container after said container is sealed.

Claim 26 (canceled).